

Week Ending Friday, February 7, 2003

**Proclamation 7645—National
African American History Month,
2003**

January 31, 2003

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

African Americans have played central roles in some of the most triumphant and courageous moments in our Nation's history. During National African American History Month, we honor the rich heritage of African Americans and pay tribute to their many contributions to our Nation. As we celebrate this year's theme, "The Souls of Black Folk: Centennial Reflections," we remember the successes and challenges of our past. We also resolve to honor the achievements and legacy of these proud citizens by continuing to improve our society so that it fully lives up to our founding ideals.

In 1915, Dr. Carter Godwin Woodson recognized the need for our country to gain a more complete and informed understanding of our past. He founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History and established the first Negro History Week to emphasize that "We have a wonderful history behind us" Through the pioneering efforts of Dr. Woodson and the hard work of the Association, this observance officially became Black History Month in 1976.

For generations, African Americans have strengthened our Nation by urging reforms, overcoming obstacles, and breaking down barriers. We see the greatness of America in those who have risen above injustice and enriched our society, a greatness reflected in the resolve of Jackie Robinson, the intellect of W.E.B. DuBois, and the talent of Louis Armstrong. We also gain a deeper appreciation for the African-American experience in the writings of James Baldwin, Ralph Ellison, and Zora Neal Hurston, as well as in the

music of Mahalia Jackson, Billie Holiday, Duke Ellington, and countless others.

African Americans reflect a proud legacy of courage and dedication that has helped to guide our Nation's success and prosperity. Visionary leaders like Frederick Douglass, Thurgood Marshall, and Martin Luther King, Jr., possessed a clarity of purpose and were instrumental in exposing and addressing the issues that threatened our founding principles. The battle for freedom, equality, and opportunity was fought on the front lines by strong figures such as Harriet Tubman and Fannie Lou Hamer, as well as many other everyday heroes who helped to lead this Nation to a more hopeful and just society.

As we recall these remarkable individuals, we also recognize that, despite our progress, racial prejudice still exists in America. As a Nation and as individuals, we must be vigilant in responding to discrimination wherever we find it. By promoting diversity, understanding, and opportunity, we will continue our efforts to build a society where every person, of every race, can realize the promise of America.

This month, I encourage all citizens to gain awareness of and appreciation for African-American history. As we remember this important part of our Nation's past, we look to a bright future, recognizing the potential of an America united in purpose, guided by spirit, and dedicated to equality.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim February 2003 as National African American History Month. I call upon public officials, educators, librarians, and all of the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate programs and activities that highlight and honor the myriad of contributions that African Americans have made to our Nation.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this thirty-first day of January, in the year of our Lord two thousand three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-seventh.

George W. Bush

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NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on February 5. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

February 1, 2003

Good morning. Earlier this week, I reported to the American people on the state of our Union. I asked Congress to join me in meeting the great challenges that confront our Nation with the courage and resolve our times require.

Working together, we'll strengthen our economy and lay the foundation for sustained growth so that every person who wants to work can find a job. We will modernize Medicare to make sure that seniors can choose the coverage that fits them best, including coverage for prescription drugs. We will reform America's medical liability system to cut down on excessive lawsuits that are driving up the cost of health care. We will make America less dependent on foreign sources of energy by speeding up development of pollution-free cars that run on hydrogen. We will renew the hope of welfare reform and support the faith-based and community groups who bring hope and healing to children who need mentors and men and women who struggle with drug addiction.

The qualities of courage and compassion that we strive for in America also determine our conduct abroad. Across the world, we are meeting the threat of terrorism to make the world safer and confronting the grave dangers posed by outlaw regimes. At the same time, America can also make this world better by bringing the merciful powers of modern medicine to people in great need.

Today in Africa, nearly 30 million people have the AIDS virus, including 3 million children under the age of 15. To meet this growing crisis, I am proposing the Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. This comprehensive plan will prevent 7 million new AIDS infections, treat at least 2 million people with life-extending drugs, and provide humane care for millions of people suffering from AIDS and for children orphaned by AIDS. Facilities across Africa will have the medicine to treat AIDS because it will be purchased with funds provided by the United States.

I'm asking the Congress to commit \$15 billion to fight AIDS overseas for the next 5 years, beginning with \$2 billion in 2004. This plan, coupled with our ongoing efforts, will nearly triple our current annual spending on the global fight against AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis.

Our efforts to combat AIDS in Africa are made more difficult by severe food shortage sweeping that continent, a crisis that affects up to 30 million people in southern Africa and the Horn of Africa, particularly Ethiopia. Hunger, sickness, and grief have left people across the continent even more vulnerable to the effects of AIDS.

Across the Earth, America is feeding the hungry. More than 60 percent of international emergency food aid comes as a gift from the people of the United States. Building on this commitment, my budget for 2004 calls for more than \$1 billion to meet emergency food needs worldwide. Today I announced a new proposal for a \$200 million famine fund to bring immediate assistance to Africa and other regions facing starvation. Money from the fund will be available to purchase food supplies directly or to support farmers in food production. We will encourage friends around the world to set up similar funds and leverage our combined resources to provide the most help to famine-stricken lands.

Through all our efforts to fight disease and hunger, we can spare people in many nations from untold suffering, and Africa especially. Millions are facing great affliction, but with our help, they will not face it alone. America has a special calling to come to their aid, and